

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Statement on Certification of Repeal of the Department of Defense's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Policy

July 22, 2011

Today we have taken the final major step toward ending the discriminatory "don't ask, don't tell" law that undermines our military readiness and violates American principles of fairness and equality. In accordance with the legislation that I signed into law last December, I have certified and notified Congress that the requirements for repeal have been met. "Don't ask, don't tell" will end, once and for all, in 60 days—on September 20, 2011.

As Commander in Chief, I have always been confident that our dedicated men and women in uniform would transition to a new policy in an orderly manner that preserves unit cohesion, recruitment, retention, and military effectiveness. Today's action follows extensive training of our military personnel and certification by Secretary Panetta and Admiral Mullen that our military is ready for repeal. As of September 20th, servicemembers will no longer be forced to hide who they are in order to serve our country. Our military will no longer be deprived of the talents and skills of patriotic Americans just because they happen to be gay or lesbian.

I want to commend our civilian and military leadership for moving forward in the careful and deliberate manner that this change requires, especially with our Nation at war. I want to thank all our men and women in uniform, including those who are gay or lesbian, for their professionalism and patriotism during this transition. Every American can be proud that our extraordinary troops and their families, like earlier generations that have adapted to other changes, will only grow stronger and remain the best fighting force in the world and a reflection of the values of justice and equality that define us as Americans.

Categories: Statements by the President : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, certification of repeal.

Names: Mullen, Michael G.; Panetta, Leon E.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Civil rights : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, equality; Defense, Department of : Joint Chiefs of Staff; Defense, Department of : Secretary.

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